



June 28, 2021

Edward A. Blazel  
Assembly Chief Clerk  
Risser Justice Center  
17 West Main Street, Suite 401  
Madison, WI 53703

Mike Queensland  
Senate Chief Clerk  
B20 – Southeast, State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Assembly Chief Clerk Blazel and Senate Chief Clerk Queensland:

In accordance with Wis. Stat. s. 49.175(1)(uk), the Department of Children and Families is required to submit to the appropriate standing committees a report on the Grants for Prevention Services on the effectiveness of the grant program by June 30, 2021 and each odd-numbered year thereafter. As specified by the statute, DCF must allocate \$500,000 annually for grants that encourage innovative practices aimed at reducing the contact that families have with the child welfare system and preventing the removal of children from their homes.

### **Goals of Grants for Prevention Services**

DCF developed the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Grants Program (herein referred to as Prevention Grants) to address the needs for services for families that would reduce the contact that families have with the child welfare system and prevent the removal of children from their homes. The program recognizes the wide array of risks leading to child abuse and neglect and the long-term impacts maltreatment can have on a child's life, as well as the need for communities to have opportunities to implement innovative prevention programs tailored to their unique community needs. The Prevention Grants fund communities to implement evidence-based models for services and programs or implement innovative strategies meeting the community's specific needs.

### **Prevention Grants Programs and Services**

Through a competitive request for proposals process, DCF awarded one grant to programs in each of six regions of the state: Northeast, Northern, Western, Southern, Southeastern, and Milwaukee. Prevention Grants prioritize services to families at risk of contact with the child welfare system or at risk of a child's removal from the home.

Six communities are currently being served through Prevention Grants awarded to five non-profit organizations and one county human service organization. Contracts began January 1, 2019 and the grant amounts range from \$78,000-\$85,000 annually. The below chart outlines the counties served, award recipient, and services being funded.

County & Agency	Services Funded with Prevention Grant
<i>Southern Region</i> Dane County Department of Human Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model: Early Childhood Zone – Neglect Prevention Home Visiting</li> <li>Target Population: Families from the North side of Madison with children ages 0-4. Families are referred to the program by CPS if they have at least two unsubstantiated neglect referrals. Community partners can also make referrals.</li> <li>Services: Home visiting services with a focus on mental health supports and housing &amp; other economic stability resources</li> </ul>
<i>Northeast Region</i> Family & Childcare Resources of Northeast Wisconsin (N.E.W.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Models: Triple P Levels 3 &amp; 4 and Parents as Teachers</li> <li>Target Population: Families at risk of child abuse and neglect in Brown and Shawano Counties</li> <li>Services: Evidence-based home visiting, discussion groups, and parent education groups</li> </ul>
<i>Northern Region</i> Northwest Connection Family Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model: Community Response with Northern Enhancements</li> <li>Target Population: Families in Sawyer County and LCO Tribe screened out after CPS Initial Assessment and those referred from community partners</li> <li>Services: Identify immediate needs and connect families to formal and informal supports and resources; also funded are new baby visits and Parent Cafés</li> </ul>
<i>Southeast Region</i> Parent’s Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model: Community Response</li> <li>Target Population: Families in Waukesha County who have been screened out or closed after a CPS Initial Assessment</li> <li>Services: Identify immediate needs, connect families to formal and informal supports and resources</li> </ul>
<i>Milwaukee County</i> The Parenting Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model: Family Links</li> <li>Target Population: Families in Milwaukee screened out after CPS Initial Assessment or referred for in-home safety services; self-referrals</li> <li>Services: Coordinated referrals, intensive case management, evidence-based in-home parent skills building and parent leadership development</li> </ul>
<i>Western Region</i> The Parenting Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model: Strong Families Consultant</li> <li>Target Population: At-risk families in LaCrosse and Monroe Counties referred by CPS and community partners</li> <li>Services: Provide families with concrete supports for basic needs or pressing family problems to enable them to participate in one of the evidence-based programs offered by The Parenting Place, such as Parents as Teachers, Triple P, Active Parents, and Nurturing Parents, among others</li> </ul>

### Programming Overview

Each Prevention Grants agency is implementing a program unique to their community, and DCF worked with the programs to capture initial service delivery information. Services being delivered include a mix of locally developed programming, which is aligned with evidence-based or evidence-informed service models (such as [Community Response](#) and [Strong Families](#)), and

which include formal evidence-based programs (such as [Parents as Teachers](#) and [Triple P Parenting](#)).

### **Program Referral Information**

The majority of referral sources identified by the Prevention Grant agencies came from local child protective service and county human or social service agencies. Child care providers, along with educational personnel, also served as frequent referral sources. Other referral sources included:

- Community-based service providers such as local domestic abuse providers, health professionals, faith-based providers, and homeless shelter staff;
- Family or friends;
- Law enforcement personnel.

### **Population Served Description**

As has been seen in many other service areas, the COVID-19 public health emergency greatly affected local providers ability to deliver services to local community members. However, based on service data gathered by Prevention Grant agencies during the first quarter of the 2020 calendar year period, the following information is available related to the characteristics of children and families served by the local Prevention Grant agencies:

- Three quarters of the adults served by the agencies were between the ages of 20 and 39 years, most of whom were either birth parents, stepparents, or relative caregivers.
- Most caregivers were women and just under half of the caregivers were identified as white with the majority of caregivers being persons of color.
- Over half of the caregivers were either employed full or part-time or had a caregiver who was a student, and most caregivers had graduated from high school or had participated in or had a college degree.
- While children served by the agencies ranged from birth to 18 years old, most children served were under the age of 5 years.
- About one-third of the families served during this period had one to two children and two-thirds of the families had more than three children.
- Annual household income was noted to be less than \$49,000 for about two-thirds of the families.

### **Initial Program Monitoring**

The first annual post-implementation site visits were to take place during the first quarter in calendar year 2020. In-person site visits were able to take place with three of the six Prevention Grant agencies in February and March 2020 with the remaining agencies receiving virtual site visits during March and April 2020. The purpose of the initial site visits was to assess compliance with grant requirements, identify and discuss agency strengths of the agency, and identify any needs for support or technical assistance.

### **Evaluation**

The programs funded by the Prevention Grants are aimed at preventing child abuse and neglect, which can be challenging to measure or evaluate. During the first full year of implementation, local Prevention Grant agencies participated in an evaluation planning process to determine what

common measures can be evaluated across all types of child abuse and neglect prevention programs funded under this grant. Core considerations related to identification and selection of common program outcomes that would contribute to evaluating local and state-level impact were as follows:

- Each local program identified a service model in response to needs identified in their communities or to enhance already existing services for families.
- Each local program identified how they will specifically coordinate with the child welfare system in their region in order to carry out these services.
- Direct program participant feedback is critical to understanding the effectiveness service delivery and promoting positive outcomes.
- Local Prevention Grant agencies are expected to evaluate and collect data on the service model they identify in accordance with the evidence-based model requirements, where applicable, and provide general demographic and participation data and a summary of program implementation and outcomes as part of their individual contract reporting responsibilities.

Based on this collaborative planning work with the local programs in addition to ongoing program reporting requirements, the following common program outcomes were identified to be further explored during the evaluation period during calendar years 2021-2023:

- Develop and implement methods to elicit feedback from program participants related to their ability to affect positive changes in their lives because of their involvement in the local Prevention Grant agency program.
- Increase the percentage of families who know who to call and where to go to seek assistance when and if needed following their involvement with the local Prevention Grant agency program.
- Increase the percentage of families who successfully complete the local Prevention Grant agency program, and if the program included specific goal setting to support program completion, increase the percentage of families who successfully complete those goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to report on this important child abuse prevention grant funding.

Sincerely,



Emilie Amundson  
Secretary